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TAGS: [PREL](#) [ENRG](#) [ETRD](#) [EAGR](#) [PL](#) [EU](#)
SUBJECT: POLAND BLOCKS GAERC ON LAUNCHING NEW PCA
NEGOTIATIONS AT EU-RUSSIA

REF: A. WARSAW 2238

1B. USEU WEBWATCH OF NOVEMBER 13

Classified By: Political Counselor Mary Curtin, reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY. FM Fotyga announced at the November 13 GAERC that Poland would continue its opposition to the EU opening negotiations for a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with Russia in advance of the November 24 EU-Russia Summit, absent Russian ratification of the European Energy Charter (ECT) and lifting of a Russian ban on meat and other food imports from Poland. The Polish MFA confirmed that the GOP position had not changed since the run-up to the October 20 Lahti meetings (reftel), but stressed that Poland objected "in principle" to negotiating a new PCA until "Russia first respects its existing obligations under the current PCA."
END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Polish and international media reported November 13 on the Polish decision to effectively veto the GAERC proposal to authorize the European Commission to open PCA negotiations before the EU-Russia Summit. The Polish wire service PAP quoted FM Fotyga as stating that "Poland will not change its negative position on adopting the EU mandate" for negotiating a new PCA "without a political signal from Russia." MFA EU Department Deputy Director Pawel Herczynski confirmed to Pol External Chief the substance of the EU decision. However, Herczynski also emphasized that the question of the ECT and the Russian import ban were merely symptoms of Russia's failure to respect its existing PCA commitments. Reiterating his earlier comments (reftel), Herczynski wondered why the Finns were in "such a hurry" to open PCA negotiations and opined that it was merely because they wished to have a deliverable for the November 24 Summit. He also reminded that, absent a new agreement, the existing PCA will remain valid even after its technical expiry date.

13. (C) The Poles are apparently under pressure from some other EU countries to drop their opposition. We have heard that Italian PM Prodi called President Lech Kaczynski on November 9 to urge Poland not to block the GAERC decision. By contrast, the French DCM told us that not only has France softened its own support for moving forward on a new PCA, but in fact the GOF might be secretly pleased at the Polish intransigence.

14. (C) COMMENT. MFA contacts had told us several months ago that they expected the Finnish EU presidency to simply begin planning for the new PCA and hand off all the real work to the succeeding German presidency. However, the GOP was forced by the Finnish-imposed format at Lahti to go public with its opposition to what it considered premature opening of PCA negotiations. The Poles have remained consistent in their position since Lahti, apparently surprising some EU partners who believed that this was merely a tactical move. We believe that, notwithstanding recent GOP efforts to

improve relations with Russia, the GOP will stand firm on principle for the time being. However, the Poles may eventually take the fallback position of insisting that the relevant ECT provisions be included in the new PCA rather than demanding actual Russian ratification of the ECT (reftel). The meat import ban is more difficult to judge, but reports in the International Tribune on November 14 that the EU may send inspectors to Poland to certify its agricultural products may indicate that the Polish stand on the PCA is bearing fruit. END COMMENT.
HILLAS